

# Editorial

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**JEL Classification:** I2

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the 5th volume of JECTR, with a double issue covering 2021. The publication has been delayed, due to the SARS-COV-2 Pandemic extensive disruption in the education process, which has strongly affected people, institutions, and functions at all levels and sectors of education and training. As we write this Editorial, the Pandemic is in recess in most parts of the world, at least concerning the number of people in need of hospitalization due to the infection, but most agree that the medical emergency is far from over. Despite the challenging times, this Journal continues to present original refereed papers, both conceptual and research-based, aiming at stimulating interdisciplinary discussions on contemporary educational theory and practice. This double issue hosts seven contributions which elaborate on conceptual developments and practical applications in contemporary education theory, research and practice.

Associate Editor Evangelos Christou and I are also delighted to welcome Yiannis Roussakis as Associate Editor of the Journal, and Kafenia Botsoglou, Paraskevi Chatzipanagiotou and Elisa Isabel Gavari Starkie, who are joining as members of the Editorial Board.

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## 2 PRESENTATION OF THE ISSUE

In the first paper of the Issue, Chatzipoulidis, Kokkinis and Kargidis, in their timely paper, examine the standardization in the management processes of Higher Education Institutions. The authors provide a review of the relevant literature, focusing on ISO 9001 and ISO 27001 standards. Based on a brief analysis of ISO requirements, they, then, highlight best practices which HEIs can employ to implement and adapt to these ISO standards. They argue that the goal of standardization in HEIs is to ensure uniformity in educational practices and improve process stability, technology management and satisfaction of all the relevant parties, and that focusing on standardization practices, can contribute to supporting HEIs management in successfully delivering their mission, especially while operating in an environment with increased volatility and limited resources.

Jelena Ž. Maksimović, Jelena S. Osmanović Zajić and

Anastasija S. Mamutović, present the findings of their research on university students' reflections on the mentoring process followed by their professors. Student mentoring is viewed as an indispensable part in university teachers' role. This research uses quantitative and qualitative methods to investigate, among others, the views of the students regarding the necessary skills that make a university professor an effective mentor and the challenges they face in the mentoring process. Results reveal that students focus on the appropriate communication and interpersonal skills of their mentors, their ability to distinguish signs of students' emotional and physical stress, but also on and their mentors' interest in their academic and professional advancement.

The next paper of the issue, authored by Anca Parmena Olimid and Daniel Alin Olimid, refers to a subject that gains significant importance for contemporary education, also in the light of the increased digitalization and use of online technologies in education settings. It describes and explores the legal provisions, compliance, and implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) within the educational institutions (EI), focusing on the data protection and the privacy requirements in the European Union institutional governance. Their study uses a multi-faceted methodology of the GDPR research, which includes the conceptual and legal analysis and an interpretative approach, focusing on EIs both as "public authorities" and as non-public authorities, under the jurisdiction of local authorities. It examines main definitions of the GDPR with impact for the educational sector, the data subjects' rights (DSR), the type of personal data (PD) collected by the EI, the data controllers and the data processors and, the lawfulness of processing of the PD and the legal provisions concerning the tasks and duties of the Data Protection Officer (DPO).

Papanikolaou, Roussakis and Tzionas, in their paper, propose a new Scheme for Internal Research Grant Allocation to research labs, based on Ethical Theory grounds. The issue of private grant allocation gains additional importance for Universities and academics, as public funding for Universities declines worldwide, urging institutions to seek additional funding from external sources, i.e., donor foundations, industry groups and private companies. They argue that in a truly democratic university, the allocating body, i.e., the Senate, should be open to ideas and methods that originate outside their own cultural and political

traditions. In this vein, they argue, the best way of making comparative judgments on the issue, is by considering multiple points of view, refined by different ethical theories, and by assigning different relative weight coefficients to the emerging arguments. In their view, this can lead to a consensus in the allocation of process, in line with the university's overall vision on research.

In the fifth paper hosted in this issue, Ioanna Tsarpa and Teo Koutroukis study Adult Learning Professionals (ALPs) and their essential competences. In their literature review they survey, categorize, and prioritize required typical and essential ALP competences, towards professionalization. Subsequently, they present the findings of their interviews with students at Hellenic Open University, on their perceptions of essential ALP competences. The most frequently referred competences include the knowledge of their subject, their ability to empower students to develop and go on with their studies, and their attitude towards building a strong relationship among them.

The sixth paper of the issue, by Lulu Sun, is an autoethnography of a doctoral student's journey during COVID-19. It aims to demonstrate the possibility of using art to improve international students' or researchers' self-study and well-being during times of crisis. It uses the metaphor of paintings and drawings to imply the relationship among self-study, well-being, and art for the researcher as an international doctoral student. The research data are analyzed using Flow Theory and the concept of "belonging" to reveal the meaning of art in the researcher's life.

The last paper of this issue, by Sofia P. Tsakalidou, presents and discusses the use of teaching practices based on the principles of differentiated instruction, in a mixed-ability foreign / second language-learning classroom. She examines, first, the advantages and the difficulties of group-work in the classroom, as well as the necessary elements that are required in any cooperative learning process. Furthermore, she argues for the possibility to use a graphic organizer, such as the Frayer model, in a classroom which works following the Jigsaw method. Both approaches have been adapted in various subjects and fields of study with extremely positive results and, this paper presents practical examples of their combined application in Primary and Secondary education.

I would like to thank our contributing authors and welcome our readers. I trust that you will enjoy reading this new issue of the *Journal of Contemporary Education Theory & Research* and I look forward to presenting to you the 6th Volume of the Journal, which will be published within the 1st quarter of 2023.